

INTEGRITY

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THIS MONTH'S TOPIC:
HOT, COLD & TEPID

APRIL, 1951, VOL. 5, NO. 7

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EDITORIAL



NO ONE can deny that mediocrity is more or less our heritage. Some people say it is owing to the materialism of the last several generations. Who can be heroic on too full a stomach? Who can dream dreams in a commercial school? Who can lead a spiritual life in a sea of gadgets? Other people lay the blame on a false theology (in practice) about nature and grace. They say we have placed too much confidence in our own efforts, as though we could be good without God, get along together without grace, and make a good society without mentioning the supernatural above a whisper. The greatest human genius, the highest effort, the most gifted personality always betrays its promise in the end, and life takes on a kind of glittering deadness.

Then comes the revolt. People cannot tolerate colorlessness and tepidity forever. They burst the bonds of convention in the direction of the hot or the cold. That's what is going on now. Youth particularly is beating against the wall of mediocrity. The "cold" hate Christ, which He said He preferred to indifference. The "hot" love Him with a total devotion. The mediocre grow restless with their own apathy or take refuge in drugs against the intensity of human experience and the reality of the Incarnation.

Where tepidity reigns there is nothing to do but shout oneself hoarse in an effort to keep people awake. Missions are in order in parochial life, and especially the sort of mission which emphasizes Hell-fire.

Now that we are entering a more violent period we need guidance more than stimulation, delicate directives more than random applications of TNT. In this issue our authors deal one way or another with the hot, the cold, and the tepid. You will notice that none of them is blasting, but that the emphasis is on analysis or clarification. They can take for granted a growing fervor.

THE EDITORS

If you know any people who might become interested in INTEGRITY, we shall be glad to send them, free, our new INTRODUCTION if you will send us their names and addresses. Quantities are also available to give away at meetings.

The Spiritual Crisis of Middle-Age

There is "a class of forty-year-old people." Its existence has been made clear to us by Peguy. Or rather, to put it in the technical language of the sociologists, there is an age group which includes mature people from the thirties to the sixties. If, inside this group, one finds a natural and unavoidable sex differentiation, it is still true that the psychology of adult men and women is very similar.

Now, among the characteristics of this psychology, at least apparently, it seems that some kind of crisis can be noticed; it is more so with the man than with his mate, though noticeable in her too. It will be useful to study this "climacteric" age of the religious evolution.

Let us look around among the adult men we know. Here is one we used to consider pious. At one time he fulfilled his Christian duties faithfully and punctually, even with zeal, and seemingly with joy. Now he hurries through the routine of his Sunday Mass; he arrives late, leaves early; he even sometimes misses it without any serious reason. As soon as a sermon exceeds its usual length, he grows restless and his whole attitude is inattentive.

Take another case. Originally it was a sense of justice, a Christian spirit, a compelling love, that made this man so militant in social and political action, which led him to give himself to worldly affairs. As a young man he balanced strong activity with a deep spiritual life. We meet him now; he is nothing more than a politician, or a social technician. He is literally dried up. Action has eaten up the spirituality in him. A curious bias has distorted his mental attitude; forgetting his original goal he has lost himself in means and intermediate ends.

We remember another who as a boy of twenty was passionate, enthusiastic, full of zeal and self-denial. What a wonderful champion the Church was going to find in him! Look at him now: bourgeois, absorbed in money, comfort and pleasure. His former flame has been buried under the weight of material things. He has dropped everything. Scarcely can he remember his youth.

Our next example, on the contrary, recalls it all too well. He tries to perpetuate a past adolescence in his adult life. He is like Peter Pan who did not want to grow up. To avoid the crisis he foresees, he refuses to become an adult. So he remains undeveloped, childish, pitiful, somewhat ridiculous.

Finally, one last case. This man married for love and founded a nice large family. But seeing him now, one is forced to think the only thing that remains of his love is a dead and distant memory, like a lock of hair in a pendant. Duty, with all the dryness that the word implies, has replaced love; he loves his wife and children because it is his duty to do so. The gentle and charming lover of old has been transformed into a *paterfamilias*, bossy, aloof, sometimes tyrannical, always a little pontifical.

Are these characters I have just "roughed in," as a painter would say, purely imaginary? It would not seem so, from observing the majority of adults.

Let us take a good look at ourselves, men of forty, let us examine ourselves honestly. Don't we feel, at times, as though we were suffering from some kind of spiritual anemia? As though our souls, if I may dare to use such a word, lack red corpuscles, or rather to speak without metaphor, lack spontaneity, zeal, responsiveness, generosity. The little spiritual life we have left is stale and gives us no consolation. We live by reason, duty, and in general we do what has to be done because it has to be done. We pay visits to churches in a formal way, more or less as we would call on our boss or our maiden aunt. We want to give God what He demands through His Church, to be fair in our dealings with Him, as with everyone else, to feel that we are leading orderly lives because we comply with the law. But we feel as though we are mechanically expending vitality we have previously acquired, as though we are automatically making gestures and saying words. We have become spiritual robots. In our childhood and youth we formed habits of saying our daily prayers, going to Sunday Mass. Now we act habitually at the appointed times, just as our cat, responding to his instincts, appears punctually at dinner-time without needing a clock. This automatism bothers us and weighs on us. We wish we were more spontaneous but we feel we are incapable of it.

Duty, habit—they are very dry and dull. However, we seem to be impervious to feeling, steeled against all emotion. Apart from a few fleeting instances produced by a sharp memory or by some violent shock, and lasting only for a split second, we are generally devoid of "religious feeling." The conjunction of those two words seems almost laughable to us. We are only faintly amused at such expressions as the "gift of tears," or "torrents of tears," that we run across in old books on spirituality. Tears seem to have flowed more freely in former ages than in ours. The tears of enthusiasm seem equally remote from us. Are we,

then, the tepid, those lukewarm who will be vomited out by Our Lord, because they are neither hot nor cold? There are times when we are afraid this is true. But this very fear shows that our lukewarmness is not total, since the mark of the lukewarm is to feel at home in his mediocrity.

No wonder we find ourselves looking back nostalgically on our youth. Everything was nice and easy then. We were readily "carried away" by an idea or by a man. We measured (or thought we did) the curve of our spiritual growth by our emotional temperature. We acted on impulse, and we gave ourselves without counting the cost. A deep-rooted generosity surged in us as sap rises in the spring. Yes, everything was nice and easy then—even repentance and the firm purpose of amendment when we had sinned. Now we feel ourselves to be hard, selfish and calculating. Should we accept ourselves as we are, or should we try to revive our youth?

Let us admit it without false shame. Praying does not comfort us; it tires us. It is nothing more than a long string of distractions broken by a few attempts at recollection. Our family troubles, our financial worries, our professional difficulties, perhaps for the best among us the problems of our country, of the world and of contemporary history, all these daily cares we don't seem to forget. We bring them along with us to Church and even to the altar rail. Though we believe we ought to empty ourselves and make room for God's presence, we think instead of the health of our youngest child, of the cost of living, of the latest election. A whole series of meaningless pictures runs endlessly through our minds.

What about "devotions"? We look down on them. They don't interest us, and we get no strength from them. We don't argue over their intrinsic worth, but they seem ill-fitted to our own case. We think they are suitable only for women and children. Perhaps this is because we do not always understand their deep meaning, hidden sometimes under superstitious appearances; or perhaps it is because some of them which answered the psychological needs of another age are meaningless to the modern Christian; perhaps again, because some others are supererogatory useless even to women and children.

Whatever it is, we find little comfort in prayer. Spiritual direction does not bring us much either. It was a great help in our youth, when we were between fifteen and twenty. Now we feel an almost invisible repugnance to exposing our souls. Besides we do it awkwardly because we're unskilled in analyzing and

expressing our feelings. Moreover we are burdened with very definite familial, professional and political responsibilities which make us distrustful of advice which is too concrete, for fear it will encroach on our legitimate freedom. On the other hand we don't want advice which is too vague because that won't teach us anything we don't know already. Outside a few severe crises, when we have to have advice and help, spiritual guidance seems to be unadapted to the routine of our daily lives. We go to Confession but again it's only through duty, because we have to.

Because of these things we have established a divorce between our active life and our spiritual life. On one side is Mass, Communion, a few prayers, even from time to time a closed retreat (we are thinking of the most "spiritual" among us). On the other side is the family, the children whom we rear in a purely natural way, business, which as everyone knows, is business, and all-engrossing politics. A Christian attitude is not wholly lacking in these temporal affairs, but it appears again under the form of duty, that is of genuine moral principles, more human than Christian, and quite remote from spirituality.

At the same time we have to face brutal temptations. They are the temptations of the mature man, proud, selfish, eager to succeed before being caught by approaching old age. The temptation to a false peace; the abandonment of all charitable activities, of all Christian combat, in order to secure rest for the body and peace for the mind, comfort and money, a nice easy cozy life. The temptation to a false efficiency; to sacrifice everything for worldly success, in order to reach the top, to secure money and power, to become someone. The temptation to a false glory; to be admired, to become famous, to collect honors, to feel one's influence prevail. How can we resist those attractions with our phantom-like spiritual life?

This explains why an adult's predominant feeling is that of being abandoned. He is alone, desperately alone in a hostile world, facing ceaseless temptations. Even God seems to remain silent.

* * *

I have been analyzing the adult's spiritual crisis without making any real judgment. To judge it would require lengthy development, which will have to await another time. For the time being a few leading comments will have to suffice.

In this crisis subjectivity has to be discounted. Spirituality has nothing in common with sentimentality. One can, thank God, lead a very deep spiritual life without any "gift of tears,"

without effusions and deliriums of enthusiasm. In this regard, the flowery imagery in certain types of pious literature can do us a great disservice.

An adult is what God has made him and he must accept himself as such, without ridiculously trying to perpetuate a departed adolescence. An adult acts mainly on rational incentives, at least when he has the time and opportunity to think things over. His inclination is toward external activities, toward the building and the making of things. The problem is how to use these dispositions to serve spiritual ends.

It is true, though, that an adult suffers from his infidelities to grace, a burden which increases with the years. These accumulated infidelities can finally enclose him in a state of spiritual lukewarmness and mediocrity which is only too harmonious with the calculating egoism and proud self-sufficiency of adulthood. Whenever he prefers himself to God, the adult closes in on himself more and more. Because he does not think of God, he cannot pray any more. It takes a continuous and unrelenting self-discipline for him to break away from himself. He needs a tremendous amount of will power to keep on the right path.

As a last point, I should like to speculate that the adult's spiritual crisis may be largely caused by intellectual errors and especially by some false ideas of spirituality. Is a man really offered any spirituality other than the practice of Christian ethics and of a few optional "devotions"? And when, by chance, he is offered one, is it really adapted to an adult layman's state of life and to the psychology of his sex?

Isn't he rather offered a spirituality suited to a cloistered monk, an old maid or a young college boy? Isn't he given the alternative of no spirituality at all, or an ill-adapted spirituality?

This opens up the whole question of the need for a spirituality for lay people which is adapted to their state and consonant with the all-embracing spirituality of the Church as a whole. This is not an academic question, for lay people are thirsty and searching for the waters of eternal life.

JOSEPH FOLLIET

Religious Vacation

Here lies Thomas Edmund C. McCann,
Who did no service to God, none to man,
He experienced living, but his life was an empty span;
This epitaph alone bears witness there was such a man
As Thomas Edmund C. McCann.

SHEILA EMMET

"Assisi"

Sometimes I wonder what winds said to Francis
When he stood slowly alone at the door,
Alone at the door of the house of his father
While night winds nudged at the stones on the floor.
Did they look in at him, in at the window
Poverty, misery, ills without name,
Gaze on that luxury—call to him doubtfully?
This we know only, they called and he came.

ROSEMARY FROST

Religious Fanaticism

How readily the accusation of fanaticism is made (most often by parents) against anyone who wishes to be more than perfunctorily pious or zealous in his religion today. It falls like a mechanical anathema upon those who practice voluntary poverty or otherwise seriously cross the conventions of worldliness. Latecomers feel it even more than religious do because they, having more recently arrived on the scene, are less respectable. Fanaticism is the popular term. The more learned among the advocates of moderation are also more specific, intermingling charges of Jansenism, rigorism and perfectionism with such colorful expressions as "crackpot."

It is against a background of this tirade, sometimes loud and close at hand, sometimes faint and muffled in the background of my work and association, that I approached Monsignor Knox's great book on *Enthusiasm*.^{*} It is the long (600 pages) sad tale of the zealous who became zealots, of fanatics through the ages.

Thirty years, off and on, have gone into the writing of this book. It is impossible not to admire the result. Other men seem to have eaten their intellectual food raw and in haste by comparison with the manner in which Monsignor Knox has fed his mind. There is a maturity, a mellowness, a balance and an artistry about his scholarship which is delightful. Here is substance and truth and fairness from a man who knows his subject thoroughly. There is also a dry humor running through the pages. The writing is so lucid, so precise and effortless, that I can well imagine the book being used as a model for students of the English language (as it certainly ought to be used as a model of historical scholarship).

One of the things that impressed me most was the mood of the book. Monsignor Knox is never beating some pet idea of his to death. He has the detachment of the scholar. Yet he is very much there too, nor is he afraid to say whether or not he admires some of the characters involved. Yet he never believes anything worse about them than the facts establish and he consistently refrains from final pronouncements, thus leaving many things unresolved. In the last chapter he says he is not concerned to criticize but to interpret enthusiasm. I felt that only a man of great charity and virtue could have delved so deep and judge

^{*} *Enthusiasm*, A Chapter in the History of Religion with Special Reference to the XVII and XVIII Centuries. R. A. Knox. Oxford University Press. \$6.00.

so little, could have shown so much restraint. Certainly by temperament Monsignor Knox cannot be inclined toward fanaticism. The sympathy he evidently has for these ill-directed conflagrations can be better explained by his own confession (in *A Spiritual Aeneid*) that he has ever been attracted to the defense of lost causes. So it happens that he does not end up saying, in effect, "Isn't it a pity that the Church has had to suffer so much from people who went off the deep end," or that "The moral of this tale is to beware of too much zeal." The French quotation with which he finishes the book suggests rather the biblical injunction, "Be ye hot or cold, for the lukewarm I will spit out of my mouth."

Enthusiasm deals only with aberrations in a certain direction. The opposite direction from worldliness. It begins with the Corinthians whose wayward tendencies are mentioned in Saint Paul's first letter to them. Enthusiastic tendencies, it seems, have been with the Church from the beginning. Often the same errors, exaggerations and practices persisted for long periods, now dormant, now come again to life. The movements were largely underground during the Middle Ages. The Quakers and the Anabaptists, the Moravians and the Methodists are Protestant manifestations of enthusiasm. The great Catholic examples to which Monsignor Knox gives most of his attention are Jansenism and Quietism. This account largely closes around the year 1800 with only a few nineteenth-century references to show that enthusiasm didn't die suddenly. I was rather disappointed it wasn't brought up to date, but Monsignor Knox thinks that, at least in England, the phenomenon has mostly disappeared in the last century.

What is Enthusiasm?

Enthusiasm is a *tendency* and not a specific doctrine or mode of behavior. It is the opposite tendency from worldliness and laxity. It is hard to define but easy to discern (long after the event at any rate). Here is how Monsignor Knox attempts to express it.

... There is, I would say, a recurrent situation in Church history—using the word "Church" in the widest sense—where an excess of charity threatens unity. You have a clique, an *élite*, of Christian men and (more importantly) women, who are trying to live a less worldly life than their neighbors; to be more attentive to the guidance (directly felt, they would tell you) of the Holy Spirit. More and more, by a kind of fatality, you see them draw apart from their co-religionists, a

hive ready to swarm. There is provocation on both sides; on the one part, cheap jokes at the expense of over-godliness, acts of stupid repression by unsympathetic authorities; on the other, contempt of the half-Christian, ominous references to old wine and new bottles, to the kernel and the husk. Then, while you hold your breath and turn away your eyes in fear, the break comes; condemnation or secession, what difference does it make? A fresh name has been added to the list of Christianities.

It is in the light of contemporary religious trends and problems that I should like to discuss only a very few of the many interesting subjects raised by this book. My selection is determined by my own mental meanderings and does not necessarily follow the relative emphasis placed on the subjects by Monsignor Knox.

Ultrasupernaturalism

Monsignor Knox remarks that "If I could have been certain of the reader's good will, I would have called my tendency 'ultra-supernaturalism.' For that is the real character of the enthusiast: he expects more evident results from the grace of God than we others." A few paragraphs further he says, "at the root of (enthusiasm) lies a different theology of grace."

In other words, the whole problem centers around the problem of the relationship between nature and grace. Lean too far to one side and you become a naturalist, too far to the other and you become an ultrasupernaturalist, wanting grace to do all the work. The Moravians, for example, with the New Testament precedent of one example of sortilege (choosing of a successor to Judas) made drawing lots the rule rather than the exception. Even marriages and particularly elections were to be decided in this fashion. Again it shows itself in temptations to theocracy, the identification of church and state, or the contention that Christians, being under a new law, are exempt from civil or parental authority and only obey magistrates or parents, when they do, as a matter of courtesy.

If there are aberrations on this point in the Church today I think they are likely to break out with respect to God's providence and the matter of vocation. It is easy to presume that God will take care of one as He does the lilies of the field and the birds of the air, without one's moving a muscle, especially a muscle of the brain. Yet God does take care of people who trust Him and who seek first the kingdom of Heaven and who are not necessarily

efficient according to the world's standards. Furthermore, it is necessary to react strongly against the complete lack of trust in God manifested by a world maniacally intent on security.

With respect to finding one's vocation there is often an element of superstition. It is so difficult to gauge the times, so hard to find one's place in a chaotic world that people understandably prefer to consult fortune tellers or seek a mystic.

By and large the ordinary Catholic way of meeting the problem of the relationship between grace and nature today is to duck it. Sunday, grace—weekdays, nature. Or as in many Catholic papers and magazines, the solution is to juxtapose the two, serving up a potpourri of secular stories and articles along with a few pious meditations and maybe a question box. It is probably because INTEGRITY meets the problem of nature and grace head-on that it is in some quarters suspected of "ultrasupernaturalism" or "exaggerated supernaturalism." As a matter of fact, we are following as clearly as we can the Thomistic line of reasoning on this matter and so far as we know have not departed from it.

Antinomianism

Antinomianism is one of the many new words I learned from reading *Enthusiasm*. It is the doctrine that Christians are not bound by the moral law (being above it) and it appears with amazing regularity in the course of history. People get the idea that they are saved, or converted, or justified by faith, so they cannot sin any more. Ergo they need not take the precautions against temptation that other people take. Nudist cults are apt to grow up. As a matter of fact, contemporary secular nudists probably suffer from a non-religious version of antinomianism. It's a nasty business which often starts with a sort of angelism and ends with an orgy. Father Divine's followers, having been elevated to a new state, forego sex and live in brothers' dormitories and sisters' dormitories. I am sure Monsignor Knox was not surprised when Father Divine ("God" himself) married. Of course it was a purely spiritual marriage, nothing carnal involved. An old, old story.

The reason I mention antinomianism here is not because I see it hovering around the lay apostolate (quite the contrary) but because in an extenuated way it seems to be a modern non-Catholic phenomenon. I do not say a Protestant phenomenon, though it is implicit in Luther's and Calvin's doctrines if they are pushed to their logical conclusions, and John Wesley fought hard against the possibility of it among his associates. However, I am thinking more of the wishful-thinking type of cult or the pseudo-mystical,

such as Unity, Christian Science, and the Swamis. Are not these, apart from their doctrinal aberrations, unmoral, unethical? Do they ever talk about cheating in business or having one wife?

A religion which harps on morality all the time is not very attractive, and creates a yearning for contemplation. As a matter of fact, we are now entering a "mystical" period. All the more reason therefore to beware of thinking ourselves beyond the necessity of cultivating virtue, even or especially natural virtue, and falling into undisciplined habits. Incidentally poor Saint Augustine, who seems to have lent himself unwittingly to the self-justification of heretics so often, here furnishes a convenient slogan for misinterpretation: "Love and do what you will."

Convulsions and Charismata

After reading this book I felt very sympathetic toward people who have a horror of being religiously demonstrative, especially non-Catholics. This for the reason that I was reminded of how recent were their own unhappy experiences, or their parents', with revivalism of one sort or another. I can see why they are content with church services which, though dull, are dignified and why they are apprehensive when their children "get religion" with a fervor attached to it. The human race, it seems, inclines to be explosive and its favorite field for detonation is the religious one. The Church can usually contain and direct this dynamite. Outside the Church it is far less easily controlled. All the aberrations suffer from it sooner or later. The Quakers started with quaking and ended up conservative and soft-spoken. The Jansenists began in a dignified, intellectual, even aristocratic manner and ended up with the convulsions of the Cemetery of Saint-Médard, the nine-day wonder of Paris. Anyone could go see for himself "men falling like epileptics, others swallowing pebbles, glass, and even live coals, women walking feet in air. . . . You heard nothing but groaning, singing, shrieking, whistling, declaiming, prophesying, caterwauling. Women and girls who played a great part in these exhibitions, excelled in capers, in somersaults, in feats of suppleness. Some of them twirled around on their feet with lightning quickness of dervishes; others turned head over back, or stood on their hands in such a way that their heels almost touched their shoulders." And so on.

A little later, and in England, convulsive phenomena accompanied the early Methodist preachers. John Wesley, who was very interested in preternatural phenomena and who recorded all this sort of thing in his journal, had convulsives in his congregations much more often than today's Methodists like to admit. He

wasn't a wildly emotional speaker either. Yet it frequently happened that he had a few men or women (more often women, as usual) in a swoon at his feet, or shaking, with characteristic swellings of throat or intestines and possibly making interesting noises as well.

Monsignor Knox inquires only a little into the nature of these odd phenomena, it not being strictly on his point. Are they caused by hysteria, the Devil, charlatanry, or are they real religious experiences? Or are they a mixture, and if so, in what proportion? It's a fascinating subject but, as aforesaid, he doesn't go very deeply into it, though he does give enough facts to show how difficult the matter is to resolve. For instance, those who watched the Saint-Médard Cemetery goings-on described above, reported that they felt definitely elevated spiritually by the spectacle.

A number of enthusiasts had private visions, or revelations, or heard voices, or so they said. It is a private phenomenon not open to investigation. Occasionally but rarely there were claims of messiahship, even by women.

The pentecostal phenomenon "speaking with tongues" is one of those charismatic gifts like prophecy which was quite common among the early Christians, but very rare thereafter. Speaking with unknown tongues is one of the signs of diabolical possession, but the collective claim to such powers which crops up among the enthusiasts is not necessarily accounted for in this manner. An interesting point is that the strange languages spoken by Pentecostals of various sorts need not be an existent language. The claim is made that what is humanly unintelligible is one of the "tongues of angels."

Revivalism and the more spectacular charismatic phenomena have been diminishing in England now for quite a while. Monsignor Knox is aware that all sorts of religious curiosities continue to exist on this side of the Atlantic. Anything can happen in America. Here is where all the eccentrics and free thinkers have always come to roost. The "land of the free" was the refuge of every queer religion. Monsignor Knox doesn't press his point, but his occasional references are devastating enough. I am not disposed to argue with him. Ours is the land of the Mormons, the Pentecostals, the Jehovah Witnesses, a variety of utopian settlements, Father Divine, a million dollar business in astrology, Wall Street brokers who play the market according to the directives of their "mediums," and the rash of phony religions found in Los Angeles and elsewhere. Revivalism of the more unre-

strained emotional sort was the childhood experience of many non-Catholics over fifty.

There is this to be said however, and Monsignor Knox hints at it too. The fervor and emotionalism and fanaticism of today has moved beyond the orbit of Christianity almost entirely, and so does not really qualify as "enthusiasm." The people involved are of lower and lower intelligence, far less civilized. Their movements are on the borders of diabolism, of real degenerate paganism, with all its obscenities and superstitions. Huge numbers of people seem to be sinking into that hideous darkness from which Christianity over so many centuries raised men and purified them.

The Holy Father has warned us that we are entering a great age of superstition, a by-product of industrialism. There is thirst for the miraculous, an eager credulity abroad. Look what happened at Necedah. The pendulum is swinging again. That cold unbelieving rationalism which would not admit the cures of Lourdes to be genuine, even though it saw them, has vanished, and people are ready to believe anything and everything at tenth hand on the basis of the flimsiest rumor. Superstition can do a great deal of harm to the Fatima message by regarding it as a magic formula instead of realizing that, simple as it seems on the surface, it involves a real change of life. The danger is not here just from simple people but even more from what we would call "unintegrated" members of the upper classes whose vested interest in conformity to the world is very great, and who are unconsciously searching for a "devotion" on which to spend their energies.

I wonder if Monsignor Knox would agree with me that a lot of human ardor which formerly would have led to sanctity or, if warped, have resulted in religious fanaticism, now serves communism. I suppose he would agree. The same intensity is there. The same impatience with mediocrity and temporizing. There also is the great vision of the New Jerusalem, the idealistic, the total sacrifice and dedication. The fact that the reform of the social order is the preoccupation of the communists lends their movement an earthy basis, seemingly incompatible with superstition, charismata, emotional orgies and the other more spectacular manifestations of enthusiasm. However, if we can learn anything from Monsignor Knox's admirable history, it is that the tougher they are the harder they fall. We ought not to be surprised then if the communists suffer a sudden change to credulity, if they start performing "miracles," if they have visions, and if they take to writhing on the ground in convulsions to honor unseen powers.

Silent Characters and Backwashes

There is one thing about *Enthusiasm* which makes it a difficult and sometimes disheartening book to read. The things that are omitted are conspicuous by their relevance. I do not say this in criticism of the book because it is not a history of the world or of the Church, but a study of people who were intense in their religion and went off the track. One has to supply a running commentary of one's own, on the successfully enthusiastic, the saints. This takes lively thinking while one reads, and to do it well one would have to supply hagiography on a level of scholarship comparable to Monsignor Knox's—obviously impossible for such as I. Nevertheless an effort of the mind in this direction is absolutely necessary. When one finds that disaster overtook someone because of taking the Bible very literally, or neglecting the most ordinary rules of natural prudence, or holding out too high an ideal of poverty, one *has* to remember Saint Francis who did these same things to an extraordinary degree. Otherwise the book induces a sort of despair. There were times in reading it when I wanted to buy a television set and get a job in advertising as a precaution against excommunication.

The other omission which begins to prey on one's mind is the background of worldliness against which the enthusiasts reacted. There is a sort of double backwash (the author points this out but calls only one movement a backwash). It works this way: The Church gets lax and worldly (in particular Monsignor Knox cites the worldliness of the clergy as the remote occasion of all enthusiastic exaggerations), causing those who are zealous by virtue or temperament or both to strike out in the other direction. They end up as saints if successful, or as heretics if not. When they err and become "enthusiasts," the well-meaning people whom they have inspired become discouraged with the impossible ideal they hold up and react against it, finding themselves in an unhappy league with worldlings. A sad situation all around.

Worldliness

I wish Monsignor Knox had gone more into the problem of worldliness. In particular it would have been nice to have had some discussion of the fact that worldlings never seem to get into trouble. No one regards them as a menace to the Church even when they love money, become too respectable, too complacent, too bourgeois. They usually continue to enjoy honor and praise, and die peacefully in their beds with all the consolations of the last Sacraments.

It has always seemed to me unfair that the people who conform, or who water down the Christian message, should receive so little reprobation. Now I think I have been wrongly impatient in some respects, justifiably so in others. Worldliness is not an immediate threat to the unity of the Church as enthusiasm is, and therefore can better be tolerated, while the question of just rewards and punishments can be left to God. On the other hand worldliness probably does incomparably more harm to the Christian cause in the long run than fanaticism. Would it be wrong to say that the American Church is heavy with the weight of the half-Christian or the half-hearted Christian today? I think not, and I think these do great harm, chiefly in acting as a smoke-screen for Christ in His Church before the eyes and yearnings of the tormented modern pagans. It is a commonplace that the main thing which keeps non-Catholics out of the Church is the Catholics—their avarice, their hypocrisy about birth control, their political chicanery, but most of all the fact that they are in the alleged flame without catching fire. How can this be His Church if so many practicing Catholics are so very tepid?

If the worldly will be accountable before God for scaring off the non-Catholic they also, and those who water down doctrine, have their responsibility for the exaggerations of the enthusiasts. Consider the case of who is damned and who is not, and how many. One of the recurring signs of enthusiasm is the underestimation of God's mercy in this regard. The Jansenists prematurely consigned numbers of people to Hell in a manner and tone strikingly similar to that of the Father Feeney group. How much of the blame for this error in either case rests with those who first erred in the other direction? I myself can remember that in recent years it was seriously debated in the most respectable quarters, under the influence of too much psychological determinism, whether it is *possible* for a person to commit a mortal sin. Those who raised the question leaned to the view that it is not. In those same circles there was great insistence on the fact that we cannot be sure of any one person's being in Hell. I am always reminded of that when Garrigou-Lagrange cites, as he frequently does, the case of Judas in Hell, as though it were obvious that he is there. It seems daring of him to say so. And what would happen to a Dante today?

Consider the psychological effect that such teaching as the above has on a person. My first reaction was, "If it's true that none of our contemporaries are in danger of Hell-fire, we certainly are wasting our time in the lay apostolate." Then I thought

of all the people I knew who seemed to be struggling for their souls' salvation, or jeopardizing it in a harrowing way. I remembered my own sins. I recalled the numerous private revelations about the dense population of Hell, and Our Lady's saying that more people will lose their souls through sins of impurity than any other sins today—and decided to stay in the lay apostolate. But the temptation is there, especially if one does not get out of hearing of the "laxists" to feel, by contrast, that almost everyone is heading for Hell. The pendulum again.

Evidently the Holy See is conscious of the watering down of doctrine and its responsibility for provoking rigorism, because in *Humani Generis* there stands out one statement, boldly and almost irrelevantly, the pointedness of which is unmistakable: "Some reduce to a meaningless formula the necessity of belonging to the true Church in order to gain salvation."

How to Stay Out of Heresy

The problem for the enthusiastic type of person is not, as it might seem in reading this book, to hit a balance between ardor and worldliness, to bank the fires, so to speak. The problem is to be a successful enthusiast, a saint, rather than an unsuccessful one. Those who fail end way out on a limb someplace, openly defiant, holding very unorthodox doctrines. Yet in most cases there was a time in the early part of their careers when they paused uncertainly, as the road to sanctity parted from the road to schism. What made them choose wrong? Is there some one point or virtue or idea that a person can cling to as a safeguard against deviation from the faith? I would say "no," following, I think, Monsignor Knox's conclusions. Why? Because Christianity is a *balance* of elements delicately held. And because there isn't a single good thing which cannot be distorted, or about which there isn't the possibility of self-deception.

Christianity is dangerous, as life and love are dangerous, only more so. It feeds on daring and initiative. Also on obedience and self-abnegation but these last come to channel a flood or contain a fire. The first element is a vision, not a precaution. Security lies more in the direction of a trust than in a sloughing off of all uncertainties and risks.

One of the things I have observed, and that this book bears out, is that people who are overly anxious for official approval do not necessarily turn out to be the most orthodox or obedient. Take for instance the matter of *imprimaturs*. The Church requires this seal on certain writings, not on magazines like ours, incidentally. We are sometimes castigated for "not having an *imprimatur*" as

though that fact invalidated everything we said, as it were magically. Yet nine-tenths of INTEGRITY'S material is analysis of social trends which asks only that the reader think along with us to see if our conclusions do not recommend themselves as true.

Similarly in the lay apostolate there is a temptation to try to get the Church to bless all incipient projects and surround them with the mantle of ecclesiastical approval. Usually the people who thus operate do it from a conscientiousness. They think that to be a "better Catholic" lies in the direction of extravagant protestations of filial devotion. But there is no necessary correlation between all this elaborate show of obedience and real docility in a time of crisis. The reverse situation doesn't necessarily work either. The only point here is that this over-caution is not the major formula for staying in the fold.

Another favorite refuge is to undertake an obligation of obedience not incumbent on one's state in life. There are probably a lot of cases besides the obvious one of scrupulosity, where lay people do well to obey their confessors blindly, even taking a vow of obedience. But there are also a lot of cases where the temptation to do so stems from a reluctance to use the ordinary means of determining one's course, especially the use of the brain. The sort of obedience to a superior which is becoming to a religious, as part of his state in life, can easily make a lay person a prig. "My director says I can't do so and so, or I must do such and such" more often than not means walking out on a mess someone else has to untangle. How easy it is, also, to find a director to one's taste, or unconsciously to mold a director by supplying him with biased facts. One often hears it said, that if a director misdirects his subject the blame is on the priest's head. True enough, but with the lay apostle there is always the question of whether or not it is justified to shift the burden of the responsibility in this manner. We should not be trying to escape the responsibilities for things that go wrong but to direct them rightly. All that trouble at Port Royal, the center of the Jansenist fury, came through the Mother Superior's director who molded her wrongly.

But there is one virtue, surely, in which to take refuge. Is it not pride which has made enthusiasts obdurate in the face of authority? Therefore humility, the queen of virtues, must be a guarantee of orthodoxy and sanctity.

Consider then the case of Michael Molinas, a Spanish priest of the seventeenth century, who was sent to Rome to represent the cause of a priest from his district who had died in the odor of

sanctity. For some unknown reason he was later relieved of his charge. In a letter written back to Spain he accepted this blow very humbly, in terms which most of us would envy. He had, he said, never wanted the job, but had done it out of obedience. Now he was discredited. "God be praised for this humiliation, a rich treasure if only he uses it properly! . . . Well, now he is free from any temptation to vain-glory; *bonum mihi quia humiliasti me*," etc. I was in the very process of admiring these sentiments when Monsignor Knox's comment came like a dash of cold water. He detected in the letter an "hysterical humility" characteristic of the Quietists, one of the most infamous of whom poor Molinas became. Some years later this same man (who had meanwhile become the most distinguished spiritual director in Rome) publicly admitted in the Church of the Minerva that he had taught a whole string of very odd doctrines; that he had engaged in indecent practices over a long period of time, and that he himself had not sacramentally confessed for twenty-two years. The Inquisition then sentenced him to life imprisonment. Throughout the whole proceedings Molinas remained impassive and Monsignor Knox wonders if he were truly repentent or if he perhaps resigned himself inwardly to the passive acceptance of a supreme martyrdom, in a complete caricature of the virtue of humility.

So, whereas it is true that the virtue of humility is fundamental and will save us from a thousand snares, it is also true that one can deceive oneself that one possesses it and possibly more easily than with other virtues.

Christian Equilibrium

It is a balance then, and not a formula, that keeps the Christian center. Since it is a balance of a lot of elements, then it is wise not to throw out any of the elements in a wave of oversimplification. Spiritual direction, the frequent reception of the sacraments, the cultivation of virtue, spiritual reading, theological study commensurate with one's state and education, docility to Church laws and teachings, respect for authority, the practice of mental prayer, association with other Christians in some recognized form of action (this especially, for the sandpapering effect), collectively will safeguard the Christian.

But there is another thing it is well to remember if and when things get difficult. The equilibrium that the Christian practices is not gross but extremely delicate. In a sense it gets more delicate the more one tries to walk in Christ's footsteps. It would ultimately be impossible to maintain if God had not provided us with a sure Guide.

When Saint Francis' order, already grown very large, fell into dissension between those of the strict and those of the lax observance they sent for the Saint to come back from Egypt to arbitrate. As he was nearing Assisi Saint Francis had a dream of a small black hen which was not large enough to shelter all her chicks. This he interpreted to mean that he was no longer powerful enough to protect the followers who were most dear to him and who desired to follow his rule most closely. So Saint Francis by-passed the Portiuncula and went straight to Rome, where he placed the responsibility for the order on the Pope.

It seems to me that the lesson we learn from this is not just the obvious one, that the Church being divinely guided is wiser than we are and has to straighten out problems of great magnitude. The deeper lesson comes when one sees that from any human way of looking at it, the Papacy did a poor job of straightening out the Franciscan difficulties (except in the negative sense that the order didn't secede from the Church). Perhaps the world was not worthy of Saint Francis, so God let men have the mediocre way of their own choosing. Perhaps, perhaps, perhaps . . . but who is going to understand God?

The deeper meaning seems to be that we must not only accept the authority of the Church, but also the mystery of the Church, which like the Cross can be a sign of contradiction.

PETER MICHAELS



LETTER TO THE EDITORS

Though Christian zeal is nice to see,
You won't forget, I hope,
One seldom ever has to be
More zealous than the Pope.

Mothers of Saints

Only a few months ago a little girl was raised to the altars of the Church. And her mother was there to see the glory of her child being shouted from the housetops. Happy but stunned by it all, the woman murmured time and time again, "Who would have thought it!" Her Maria, a saint! Her child canonized!

Such bewilderment is easy to understand. Think of the astonishment of Jeanne D'Arc's mother when *her* young eagle took wing. Think of all the saints that ever walked the world and see a puzzled, anxious mother hovering near each one, in body or in prayer, not comprehending *but not interfering with* the mysterious work of grace in her child's soul.

It is in every sense a fearful thing, a frightening thing, to be a Catholic mother, who must with every birth give a hero or heroine to the race of saints.

Non-Catholic mothers down the centuries have inspired greatness in their sons. Patriots, statesmen, great pioneers—how many of them assent to Lincoln's eulogy: "All that I am or ever hope to be I owe to my darling mother!" Good Protestant women and good pagan women have not been found wanting in efforts to bring up sons and daughters with high ideals and strong habits of natural virtue.

The Catholic mother has an additional task. She too must build character in her child. She too must lay a foundation of natural goodness, of purity, truthfulness, obedience, loyalty, self-discipline; but if and when she stops there, as she does too often today, then she must sooner or later join the crowded ranks of the compromisers. She herself, more certainly than her child, can fall prey to the materialist outlook characterizing this century. And then we see secularism invading a home through its very heart, the mother, diluting or destroying the family's Catholic life.

So frequently Catholic mothers seem to fear that God's grace or God's Cross will manifest His action too clearly in their own children.

"Look, Lord," these women say in effect, "I intend to give my child a Catholic schooling and not too bad an example at home. Can't that be enough? Please don't, on Your part, Lord, make Mary Lou *too* religious. Don't let her want to convert, people. Or enter a convent. Don't make her *different* in any way from all our relatives and friends. And one thing more, dear Lord; don't make my Mary Lou suffer. Help me to keep her from suffering all her life."

We do not speak here of the obviously bad mother, like the one who gave her eleven-year-old son a cocktail party this past New Year's Eve. His friends were the same age and younger. It was so cute to see the little things drunk! We are forgetting also the mother who never goes to Mass, is married for the third time outside the Church, and who makes no effort to bring up her children in the faith. She won't be reading this anyway.

It is the good, practising Catholic mother, who joins the parish club and works hard at the parish bazaar; it is she who has, in innumerable instances, mystified the casual observer by one day taking a stand between her own child's soul and its Creator, defiantly as any she-bear guarding a cub. There are no steps she may not take to interfere with God's plan or His work in the soul of her child. Because of the love that is due to her as mother, she can be the all but insurmountable threat to his or her eternal good if she so wills.

Bill is a young man who has secretly cherished since his altar-boy days a strong, clear call to the contemplative life of a specific religious order. At any time that he would allude to this vocation, his mother would become so upset that he postponed taking any steps from year to year. The draft made him face the issue squarely. Either he must enter the monastery at once or be caught in the draft and possibly sacrifice his vocation.

God (Mother) Knows Best

Bill was to leave last Sunday for the monastery. His mother told him Saturday night that he could not leave until Monday because she had not washed his clothes. On Monday morning she insisted that he go down to the draft office and tell whom it might concern that he was leaving town. Unable to convince her that it would be wiser to write to the office from the monastery, Bill went down. He was informed that he would not be going anywhere, at least not where he had planned. Now he is in the army and his mother is content that he is safe from God's ways which were not her ways.

Instances of thwarted vocations to the religious life are so numerous they really do not seem out of the ordinary. An over-protective woman may understandably dread to let her boy or girl leave the warm home fires for the austerities of the *via crucis* she pictures in her mind within the convent walls. A possessive woman may understandably protest the completeness of the separation effected by her child's entry into the religious state. The mother who fights tooth and nail the supernatural desires awakened by Christ in the soul He beckons is not commendable but she is

understandable. Far more so than the woman who will interfere with and impede her child's use of the means of salvation!

Such a woman is Mrs. Brown, who detests her son-in-law. For years she has tried to break up her daughter's marriage. From last reports, she has done it. For this end Mrs. Brown has made novena after novena. Mrs. Brown is a "good" Catholic who frequents the Sacraments, especially since her husband died. Of course her daughter was married by a priest. Mrs. Brown knows that she can't marry again; but if the temptation someday comes and if the civil "marriage" is contracted, who will be the first to justify it? Mrs. Brown. "The children need a father in the home, you know." And didn't they have a father—their own?

Lucy Smith has a variation of the problem. She is happily married to Jack and her mother likes him. Family relationships and attitudes have always been fair enough—until Lucy announced that her sixth baby was expected in due time.

"Oh, Lucille! Not again—so soon! Really . . . !" Is it really respectable, Lucille, to have a sixth when the Joneses never have more than three? Lucy, in consternation, wonders what in heaven's name her mother thinks she should have done to keep up, or down, with the Joneses. And how will she take the advent of the seventh, eighth, and if-God-wills-it ninth grandchild? Mother never refers now to the coming baby any more cheerfully than she would speak of a coming World War III. But what would she have her daughter do? The nursery jingle comes to mind:

"Mother, may I go out to swim?"

"Why, yes, my darling daughter.

Just hang your clothes on a hickory limb,

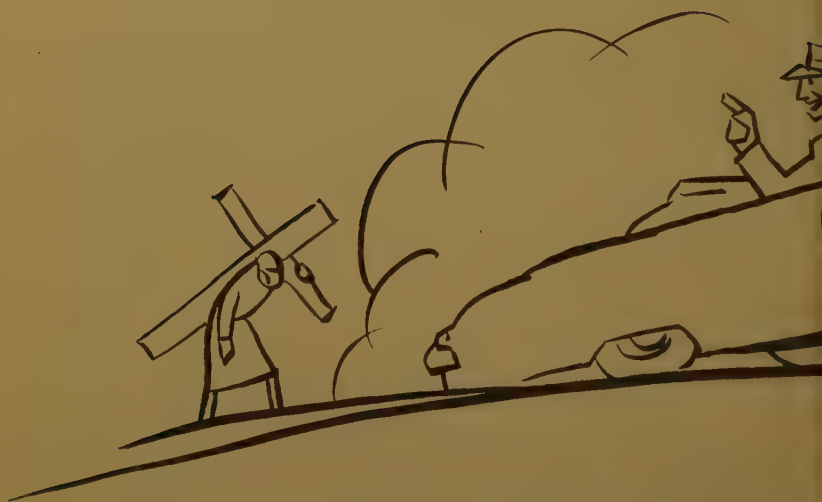
But don't go near the water."

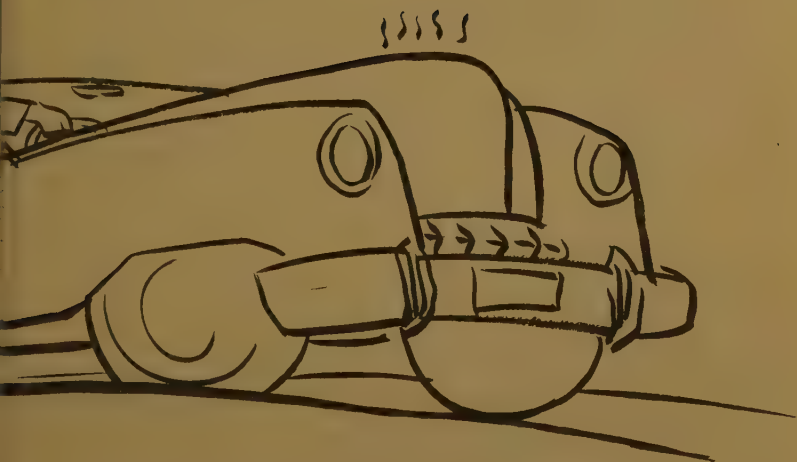
Mother, may I go out to swim in the ocean of God's Love, trusting in His divine care, letting Him bear me up on the waves of His all-wise providence? Why, yes, my darling daughter. By all means keep up the appearances. Make your Easter Duty and what-not. Get yourself and the children to Mass on Sundays and all that. But at the same time remember God helps those who help themselves. You simply have to give some consideration to the world and what it expects of you. Don't sin exactly; but don't go off the deep end on religion either. There is a happy medium, a nice compromise, somewhere. Find it.

Valiant Mothers

Young Maria Goretti is today a saint among the saints, a martyr of our times who died for purity. What part did Signora

EFFORTLESS GIVING





"LIFT?"

Goretti play in the short drama of her child's high destiny? The girl chose without hesitation to die, brutally stabbed, rather than to commit a mortal sin. Before that choice ever had to be made, did the little Maria observe a thousand occasions when her parents asked in words or in manner, "What does God want us to do in this instance?" or again, "What does God think about this? What would He have me to do?" Had she noticed that her mother abhorred the little infringements on the "perfect law of liberty" taught by Holy Mother Church—the little lies, the little gossipings, the little bargainings with the Devil?

We can almost believe, without being often mistaken, that if a child chooses death to sin, the mother of that child would have chosen death for her also. In the long history of the chosen people of God three women who were mothers of martyred sons stand out like pillars of fire in the night.

The mother of the seven Macchabees lived long before the birth of Christ. She was forced to stand and watch each boy, beginning with the oldest, tortured and mangled and fried until death freed his soul. Any one of them would have been spared if he had but tasted a morsel of swine's flesh, forbidden by the Jewish law. The woman stood there tearless, urging her sons to endure and to die in order that they might live forever with God. When they came to the youngest lad the torturers wanted to desist. They thought that with time they could make the boy weaken by promises and bribes. Imploring her youngest not to fail the mother who bore him and to win his crown with the rest, the woman pleaded with the boy so movingly that he goaded the executioners on to dealing him the death of his brothers. Last of all, the mother was martyred.

Centuries later, a Christian mother as valiant as the Jewish walked across the scene of the martyrdom of forty soldiers of the guard in Sebaste, Armenia. The Church celebrates the feast of these martyrs on March tenth every year. All were chained in dungeons and beaten and starved for some days; then they were exposed all night on a pond of ice. To insure their death, the legs of the frozen bodies were broken. Melithon, the youngest of them all, still breathed after the smashing of his legs.

The persecutors piled the corpses at dawn onto a cart to carry them away for burning. They left Melithon on the bank, intending to revive the boy and then try more subtly to win him to the gods. They did not reckon on his mother, who had watched by the icy lake all night. She picked up the lad in her arms and staunchly followed the wagon laden with bodies. When the boy

ed along the way, she threw his body on the pile with the others that as they had been united in faith and courage, and even in a common funeral, they might all go to Heaven together."

To Delight in Honor

The third great mother who consented to the death of a martyr-son lived later than the mother of the Macchabees but earlier than the Christian woman of Sebaste. If the latter two would will the death of their sons *because of eternal issues involved*, how much more readily could the Mother of God so will and not count the cost to herself!

But here we are talking of the heroic women, of martyrdom and the crucifixion of soul a mother may freely take for her share in the banquet of faith. These women are as far removed from the Mrs. Browns and the "hang your clothes on a hickory limb" mothers as a star from a fifteen-cent-store diamond. The pity of it is that, in the case of a materialist-minded mother, the bit of tiny glass started out as a star. And if it is not a star it is nothing—not even a real diamond.

Did heroism go out of fashion when the New Look of the twentieth century came in? G. K. Chesterton mourned in a poem the passing of those who delighted in honor from a world grown greedy and wise.

He would send the poor present-day idealists, born out of season, to Mary. Let them hand the trophy of "the broken heart" and the tribute of "the unbroken word" in the house of her "who bore the Child that brought the Sword."

And what is the Sword but Truth? Truth is the two-edged, ringing Sword, with the Archangel Michael's motto written on the blade: "Who is like unto God!" And the hilt is scarred with the single, grim word: "Sacrifice!"

Is it not from Truth that men and women have fallen since the turn of the century? Your grandfather and mine still had the wonder of it shining through their eyes and we may well weep the dying of that generation. For only we shall be left—we who sneered in the nineteen-twenties at the falseness of Victorian sentimentality and then substituted for it the baser falsehood of materialistic amorality before the nineteen-thirties ended.

Every one of us is affected by the frenzied pursuit of the false. You and I who are the children of Light, the spouses, sons and servants of Truth Himself, we are all breathing in the exhalations of the advertising industry, for one thing, which sweats day and night to mummify our redeemed souls in the sticky cocoon of false needs, false wants, false hopes and false goals. Daily our

eyes are blurred by the gray smog of the comfortable mediocrity into which we have been betrayed without a struggle on our part.

It is up to us, who eat the Body and drink the Blood of Truth made Flesh, to see our captivity in Egypt for what it is and to take up His sword and fight the good fight again.

It is up to us to hand this sword on to our children; for we have put machine guns in their hands and atom bombs in their pockets while we rendered their souls defenceless by depriving them of motives for soul defence.

Response to Vocation

Grace will descend where it will descend and the Spirit "breatheth where It will." It is the part of a Catholic mother to prepare the ground of her child's soul to respond to that breathing and that descent with the "Fiat" of Mary or the "Not My Will but Thine" of Our Lord in the garden. On such responses the world's redemption hung and still hangs, in a certain sense. Christ still seeks and claims His chosen, who will share His work or His suffering or both. And if He does not ask an extraordinary collaboration from every one of us, He does demand absolute fidelity. That is the minimum.

A child that has developed spiritual muscles on the self-disciplinary bars of fidelity to God in the ordinary run of his Catholic life, a child that has grown in wisdom and grace with eyes cleared by a thousand choices freely made between the visible world and the invisible, that child is the salt of tomorrow's earth, the "just man" for whose sake the Almighty One may spare us the scourge of His justice.

It was not for Maria Goretti's mother to know the designs of the Most High on her little girl. Designs there were, however, of a nature terrible and cruel in their accomplishment; but they were glorious and sweet in their final reward. If this mother had known how her daughter must die. . . ? Any mother's instinct would grab the child from the cross.

That is the point where the Catholic mother can only look to the Mother who stood at the foot of the Cross and, like her, simply *be there*—transfixed by the seven swords beyond doubt—but permitting and willing the will of God to be done in her boy or girl.

In a psychiatrist's office there stands a statue called *Mother Love*. A woman is kneeling with her arms around a boy on one side and a girl on the other. The children are facing the opposite direction from the mother, as if they are eagerly going on into the future while she clings to them and longs to hold them back in

what has gone before. Each child seems to press forward and strain from the maternal grasp. And each child, with the hand that is nearest the mother, clutches at her breast as if tearing at her heart. Both children are oblivious of this pain they inflict.

The statue depicts merely the emotional conflict that the mother and child relationship must weather in varying degrees. If we look at it from our Catholic standpoint, we might see that the mother is holding the children back from the future *and also from God's plan* for their lives if not actually from God's grace. She binds them to herself possessively and she has already lost them. She would save them from life, from suffering. For the outstretched wings of the Cross she would substitute her own outstretched and clasping arms. She would keep them children—and she herself is a child.

Truth, fortitude and sacrifice are the weapons and wings of every Catholic. The ideal mother arms her child and teaches him how to be free. She accustoms him to the mysteriously sweet flavor of renunciation and to the joy of self-control. She holds before his mind the Face of the King for Whom his little acts of sacrifice or obedience or love are done; otherwise she will find she has reared a little stoic and not a Christian. Above all, this mother herself walks in the liberty of the children of God, with her eyes on stars beyond the stars, sure of the abiding Love of the Eternal Father. She loves but does not cling. And when her children leave her side she knows that she has set their feet on the road toward their heavenly goal. They are really free.

"Who would ever have thought it?" Her child, a saint? Why, she herself would have thought it—she, the Catholic mother!

SISTER MARIEL, S.S.S.



NOTHING TOO GOOD

Mrs. Lincoln's fine son Abe,

Proved from since he was a babe,

Bumps and bruises make a man,

Much more by far than candy can.

Reform and Conversion

Gretta Palmer's column "The Top of My Mind" appears in a number of Catholic weekly papers. She is a serious journalist and her weekly stint is far above average in quality and profundity. She is not reluctant to wrestle with monumental problems, and consequently it is not surprising that on some occasions she may do less than justice to her topic. I respectfully submit the opinion that her wholly admirable propensity for rushing in grandly resulted in a formidable defeat when she published a recent column sub-titled "Reform or Conversion?" I read this column in the New York diocesan weekly *The Catholic News* of Saturday, January 20, 1951.

In about twelve hundred words she attempts to prove that Christian apostolicity is not meant to concern itself with a conscious effort toward social and political reform, but that social reform emerges as an un-self-conscious by-product of minds being converted to Christ. She says, "It is surely worth noting that the market-place is one area in which Our Lord, on earth, spent very little time. We know of His appearance in the mountains and in the desert and on the shores of the Lake of Galilee. We are told of His numerous visits to the Temple. But we are never told of His visits to a bazaar or of His leading a political party into rebellion against Rome and the injustices of Herod, or of His attacking a social system which surely had as many defects of justice and charity as our own, or of His 'reforming' any institution." These facts she uses as evidence to show that the social reformer can look to no precedence in the life of Christ to justify his peculiar kind of zeal.

She implies in this column that Catholic social reformers set out to "reform the world instead of converting it." They are "busy bodies" and "common scolds." They say, "There ought to be a law," instead of saying, "There is a law." "They exhaust themselves and their listeners with schemes for temporal and immediate reform" instead of being "busy about the far more fundamental job of preaching to anyone who would hear, the Good News of the Risen Christ." They "waste their breath in trumpety objections to defects in the social order," instead of trying "to win men's hearts to God."

It would be well for any Catholic engaged in social reform to take such words to heart because undoubtedly these do exist as dangers in such an effort, but Miss Palmer is not here guiding the

social reformer with wise words, but rather seeks to annihilate him as being a phenomenon inconsistent with apostolicity. She concludes, "We are not reformers. We are not the tinkers of society." By "we" I suppose she means Miss Palmer, Pope Pius XII, the faithful and, as an incident in the inventory, me.

I beg to differ; I am a reformer. I am of a vast company of reformers most of whose shoes I am unworthy to polish. I subscribe to the "odd assumption that the appearance of communism in the world is somehow due to our lack of social conscience." Yours is one of the "leftist and liberal Catholic publications (who) beat their breasts with an editorial *nostra culpa* whenever Red gains are chalked up anywhere in the world." She inserted a parenthetical remark in the above sentence: "(or, staring fiercely at the Hierarchy, an even more vigorous *vestra culpa*)"—sentiments which I decline to accept as mine. This is the anti-clerical red herring so frequently dragged across the path in this kind of polemic. Never having been a Bishop, I am loath to advise them in their apostolate. I act always on the presumption that if I correspond with the graces of my state in life hierarchical guidance and direction will always be there in adequate abundance to assure salvation to all of us. In this I presume upon the promises of Christ, which is not being presumptuous.

Miss Palmer's thesis might be countered in various ways. She might be pummeled with papal pronouncements or she might be anathematized as "reactionary." One might ask her if she believes that because Christ never reigned over a temporal kingdom that this seriously retarded the canonization of Saint Louis of France. One might ask Miss Palmer if the fact that Christ never married and sired a family makes of fatherhood a doubtful Christian vocation. This kind of approach might be well if I wished to argue with Miss Palmer, but I do not. I would much prefer to convince her. I have more than a suspicion that her instincts place her on our side," but that her counsel is to the contrary. May I have the privilege of telling my story.

For Example

In a small town, under the guidance of a good teacher, some Catholic high school boys exhibited a desire to "do something" in an organized way to exert a Catholic social influence. Taking stock of their own internal affairs the boys concluded that assaults on purity were having a debilitating effect upon adolescent minds around them, and that the "cause" of purity is one that flows normally from the lives of young Christian men. They had noticed that certain publications caught the eye and captured the

imagination of their buddies (as well as themselves), and that these publications flourished in great profusion on various newsstands around town. By approaching proprietors, speaking to adults, and finally by threat of boycott, they at last rid the town of such literature. The sole exception was the stand in the local railroad station. The hired attendant remained adamant. It was not his job to reason *why*, he only worked there.

Not long afterward the chaplain of the boys' group, while visiting the Big City, was introduced to a prominent Catholic executive in the company that supplied the objectionable literature to the railroad station newsstand. This same P.C.L. (prominent Catholic layman) was well known for his apostolic activities in his private milieu. When asked the reason why he peddled objectionable literature, he admitted his helplessness to reform the situation. It was for purely business reasons that such a condition prevailed—not to destroy souls. This was an unfortunate unpremeditated by-product seemingly inevitable.

I need not fill in the names of men and places because the situation is typical wherein groups of lay Catholics organize against an injustice only to discover that there is a P.C.L. at the top of the heap, more often than not reputed to be a man of Catholic sensibilities.

I should expect Miss Palmer, as a Catholic journalist, to speak out against such injustices, if she knew they existed. I should expect her, as a person of prudence, to distinguish between the personal guilt of the P.C.L. and the internal viciousness (profit) of the social institution of which he was part. Also, I should expect her, as a woman of keen perception, to realize that to advocate the preaching of doctrine and the development of personal sanctity, *instead of* setting about these social changes, would be to muddy rather than to clarify the Christian concept of moral responsibility.

The fault in the case described above is not primarily with the individual newsdealer, nor with the Catholic executive, but with an institution that places profit before purity and demands the acceptance of this same distorted sense of values by all its members whether they be at the top or the bottom of the heap.

For Another Example

Let me cite another case. There was a young man, son of a mixed marriage, who practiced no particular religion but had a strong sense of justice and fair play. He worked in a market which advertised itself as the largest market in the world. Most of the patrons were Catholic and the owner himself was a P.C.L. known for having presented altars to various churches in the city.

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The workers in this market were miserably paid and grossly overworked. My friend contacted a labor union and attempted to organize the place. After months of tremendous preparation a strike was called. Despite their promises only a few workers took to the streets. The Catholic customers walked through the picket lines, annoyed at the attempted interference with their regular Saturday shopping. The owner gleefully retained control and dismissed my friend from his employ. Miss Palmer, I'm sure, would appreciate why my friend who never knew the Church well, now hates it.

He is a communist. Were he to be converted a recantation would be expected. Why are not recantations expected from capitalists? When a communist enters the Church he is expected to leave the Party. When a capitalist enters the Church all that is required of him is to accept the doctrine, not letting it interfere with "business as usual." We are not loath to condemn the social institution of communism, and we consider ourselves, when so doing, acting in complete compatibility with Christian apostolicity. Why then is it a "waste of time" to insist upon the reform of institutions that grow upon injustice and solicit the assent of bosses, workers and customers alike to an implicitly atheistic enshrinement of *profit* as a First Cause?

Another case may be cited. A young man, son of a ship's captain, took to the sea at an early age, shipping out of San Francisco. Working conditions on board ship were beastly. Leftists organized the workers at great peril to their own lives. This young man was so impressed with communist zeal that he joined the Party. One of the leading opponents to organization was a Catholic personnel man. This stuck in the young man's craw. It was not until he had put in a stint with the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in Spain and had encountered the superior Christian zeal of Dorothy Day that he became a Catholic.

The story ends this way: A young Irishman who had become anti-clerical during the "troubles" in Ireland returned to the Sacraments upon marrying a wonderful American girl. To strengthen his faith she subscribed to a few Catholic periodicals. One evening he visited them. He was holding his head and moaning. There, given center-spread prominence in a religious monthly, was a biographical eulogy of the same P.C.L. who had fought unionism on the West coast tooth and nail! He was being praised for his prudence, but not quite in the same manner as the Householder praised the unjust steward!

Miss Palmer, I believe, would recognize the above as bad journalism, but would she recommend in its place only spiritual exhortations or excerpts from the lives of thirteenth-century saints, sufficiently remote in time so that their virtues could not be used to confound contemporary malfeasance?

The Rich Poor: The Poor Holy

In advocating social reform the Catholic is blind to the requirements of his vocation if he fails to observe two ultimate practical consequences of the reformation. The first is that the poor must become holy, otherwise their appeal for justice will be no more than an explicit envy turning to hate. We have already seen this consequence. Many union laborers today, realizing the fruits of those who selflessly died (this literally) for social justice, now themselves perpetuate the injustice by taking a week's wages without doing a week's work. Because many of them subscribed to union membership not out of a holy zeal for social justice, but out of envy, they are now themselves numbered among the unjust. Viciousness in no matter how good the cause ends only in vice.

The poor must become holy so as to see the hand of God's providence operative in their affairs despite men's injustices, and thus growing in charity they will pity rather than hate the wrongdoers. Yet in a society which is characterized by a maldistribution of land, productive tools, power and responsibility, the holiness of the poor will not alone suffice. The rich must become poor. If they do not, from whence will the wealth come to relieve the destitute? From greater productive effort? No, certainly not. Not while the cards are so stacked that the rich are always invulnerable due to their wealth and power. As long as wages are only considered to be a cost of production, the lion's share of the wealth will continue to seek the largest channel. Can the wealth that is needed come from the state? Yes, but only at the cost of welfare socialization. An authoritarian state can distribute the wealth widely but only at the expense of limiting freedom and maintaining a grossly expensive bureaucracy.

There is a prior reason for the rich to part with their wealth. Aquinas tells us that the rich man has a place in society—he is the symbol of God's providence to the poor. How can the rich symbolize God's providence except by a display of magnanimity? Yet this display of magnanimity cannot be mere ostentation, it must be to the honor and glory of God and to the benefit of the poor.

Note this fact. The most obnoxious manifestation in history of affluent niggardliness is that of the rich man who inevitably extorts his ten per cent. The poor *must* be frugal, thrifty and

paring, but not so the rich. Yet the capitalist spirit, engaging as it does the most infantile impulses to calculated self-aggrandizement, compels the rich to be even more niggardly than the poor. If I visit a poor man he does not count the beans on my plate, but they do count the beans at the million-dollar chain restaurant.

A beggar may stop a worker and get a dollar bill which represents a good fraction of the man's wealth. He cannot get a loan from the local bank and even if he did he would have to pay back more than he got.

Here is the point. Can the rich manifest God's bounty to the poor while acting within the capitalistic context? No, because generosity could not find a place within a system oriented to guaranteed returns. The rich man's generosity must be as much a flaunting of convention as the poor man's holiness. It must be as grand and foolhardy in the area of greed as the poor man's holiness is foolhardy in the area of envy. That is why, Miss Palmer, we consider it consistent with apostolicity to "harass the rich men." Does it make sense?

The Source of Social Justice

Miss Palmer states, "One of the wonders of the Mystical Body of Christ is its capacity for absorbing and sanctifying the pet enthusiasms of every century." She goes on to show us how the Mystical Body absorbed and sanctified the medieval man's "two great earthly passions," architecture and abstract thought. "The man of the Renaissance had fallen in love with painting," and men in this age of economic and social preoccupations (are desirous of) reforming the social order."

Miss Palmer seems to imply here that men are prone in each age to certain tendencies of unknown origin and that these produce gifts acceptable to the Church which are subsequently canonized. The picture thus drawn is that social reform, painting or theologizing originate in the secular contingencies of history and seek out Church blessing. I think it is safe to presume that these things can spring from a far more respectable source. Cannot holiness be the principle of human genius? Was it not Saint Thomas' sanctity rather than a great earthly passion which provoked his philosophizing and theologizing? Could it not (to return to the subject) be holiness that provokes a desire to see temporal reforms accomplished?

Supernatural motives can be the principle of actions which have temporal ends. A concern for social reform can be a manifestation of Christianity itself. It need not be merely one of many secular manifestations vying for Church patronage.

Conclusion

It strikes me then that the most objectionable feature of Miss Palmer's column was her choice of conjunction in the sub-title. It should have read "Reform *and* Conversion" instead of "Reform *or* Conversion."

Among the obligations that the conscience must consider is that of restoring social institutions to Christ. Rich and poor must co-operate. The rich will strip themselves of their greed and avarice, and the poor strip themselves of their impatience and envy. This is not an alternative to apostolicity, but rather its establishment in the concrete situation of the day. If this were done, would such Good News be other than that of the Gospels?

ED WILLOCK



TSCH! TSCH!

Woe to ye poor!

You make such scenes!

How dare you scold

The men of means!

Can't you avoid the vitriolic,

And just be quietly apostolic?

Meditations on Security

One of the important facts in the Western world is the widespread hunger for security among all classes of men. It is easy to dismiss this hunger with a shrug, to say that it is an ignominious thing and a sign of society's decay. But is it?

The Western world is not wholly bad, not wholly pagan. It is not actively Christian, not even passively Christian, but its Christian heritage is in its unconscious memory. It is not pagan, not rather, as Devas said, after-Christian.

All sorts of things pay tribute to the most important fact in the world: that the Incarnate God chose to live in it, to redeem it.

Our calendars remind us of this truth every day; we really do live in this year of Our Lord. We forget it most of the time, and some of us forget it all the time, but the world does not really forget; it ignores, but it does not forget.

The world is after-Christian, and it is a hopeful fact that it is not post-Christian. It may, please God, be Christian again. After all, there are more Christians in the world than there are communists for instance. There may even be more believing Christians in the world than there are believing communists, but if there are they are not kicking up as much fuss. And this is remarkable, because Christianity is a revolutionary religion. It is only a respectable religion when it is moribund. Christianity was a revolutionary religion in the Roman empire and is recognized to be a dangerous revolutionary religion in the Russian empire; that is why the rulers of the Russian empire are trying to stamp it out. And it is surely odd that it should be thought of as a safe element in society in countries like America and England.

Christianity is not safe at all. It is not something that makes the world safe for democracy, or for plutocracy, or for aristocracy. Its mission is not to make men comfortable, but to make them uncomfortable about themselves. And if there is one sight more repulsive to man than another that man finds repulsive it is himself. Quite a big part of his life is spent in averting his eyes from himself. Christianity makes him look at himself, and look up to God. Very early in life was this truth brought home to me. Too often for my mental comfort I remember the answer to the second question of the catechism. The question was "Why did God create you?" And the answer is that God made me to know Him, love Him, and serve Him in this world and to be happy with Him for ever in the next. So it just isn't true that my chief object in life is to serve the state, or World Futilities, Inc.

The Difficulty of Loving Jones

As I progressed in my knowledge of this strange revolutionary religion I learned a lot of things that I must do if I would really love God and serve Him in this world. For instance I have to love my neighbor as myself: that is, I have to love Jones. Now everyone knows that this is one of the hardest things in the world to do, because Jones is just frankly impossible. There are too many of him for one thing, and in the wrong places. He just gets in the way. He is shiftless, and lazy, and improvident. He wants everything done for him. He actually thinks that because I am bound to love him that I should succor him when he is unemployed, feed him when he is hungry, nurse him when he is sick, and cherish him when he is old. He says that I am his brother—because Almighty God is our common Father. In fact, taken all-in-all, Jones is just a pain in the neck to me.

I forgot to say that Jones believes in the most incredible things; incredible, that is, to all right-thinking men. He believes that he has a right to what he calls security, and says that because he doesn't trust me to act on my professed beliefs the state must guarantee him security. I suppose he means security from hunger and all that sort of thing.

I have talked to him about the importance of manly independence and of freedom. He asked me if ever I had been hungry and without the prospect of a meal. I told him about the virtues of industry and the rewards of thrift. He had the audacity to ask if I had ever been unemployed in a modern city. As I have said, he is an impossible person. And the trouble is that there are so many of him everywhere.

The welfare state seems to have come into existence just to help Jones—and of course to annoy all right-thinking people. The supporters of this state don't seem to realize that there is nothing like individual effort, individual reward, and—of course—individual punishment for bringing the best out of people. Make things so easy for a man that he can reap without sowing and not merely will you have on your hands a man who will not sow, you will also have a decaying society. By toil and sweat—and a few tears—is security won, and without them there can be no security. Not for the Joneses, anyhow. Junior came out of another drawer; he just can't be expected to go through what the old man went through. In fact, the old man went through it so that Junior shouldn't have to. Junior deserves rewarding; he chose the right father.

There is one good thing about the welfare state however that I ought to mention. It lets me out of a lot of trouble. I don't have to worry about Jones personally. I hope that Almighty God remembers that when He asks me about Jones. When Jones is hungry and without shelter he doesn't need to beg alms of me. And when he is sick I needn't nurse him. And when he is old I can go to a home—I expect they have homes for old people who have ceased to be what might be called productive units.

And Then There Is Smith

Of course the welfare state never can take the place of individual effort. I mean of thrift, and that sort of thing. Thrifty people save for security. They pay insurance premiums, and buy stock and real estate. They have regular jobs of course. I forgot to say that they are called Smith. They are hot on security, but in a thoroughly commendable way: they save for it.

Not many miles from where I live there is a town which exists out to cater to the Smiths. It is a modern, early-to-mid-nineteenth-century sort of town. Its streets are of the wide and straight sort that automobiles love; it doesn't really cater to pedestrians. Many of these streets are lined with trees and all of them have choice examples of the most pretentious architecture that jaded builders ever imposed on tired eyes. It is magnificently endowed with all the inconveniences necessary to leisured living in the modern world. Its sprawl of golf links is world-famous. It has a spawn of restaurants and tea-shops, a glitter of women's shops, an excrescence of beauty parlors, a blight of cinemas and—of course—a clutter of conventicles devoted to spiritism and occulticisms of various sorts.

This is the haven of security that the Smiths reached after years of toil and travail. This is the vision to which they lifted up their eyes. And here they spend their purposeless activity. The women journey from beauty-parlor to shop, desperately trying to materialize their delusion that they will be able to buy beauty in the one and adornment for it in the other. The men—but why bother about the men? They once were young, and now are old; once they were animal, now they are vegetable, and soon will be mineral. The women raise spirits and the men drown them. Both seek oblivion, and both, to judge from appearances, seem to find it. But look more closely and in their lustreless eyes you will see a hunted, frightened look. "I fled Him down the nights and down the days . . . down the arches of the years . . . down the labyrinthine ways . . ."

Which Has Security?

Now suppose we say that both Jones and Smith are deluded when they imagine that they have reached security when they have ensured for themselves a continuing right to the possession and consumption of material goods, have we done away with the problem? I think not. It is true that a Christian can never know security until he has finished with the trial that is his life in this world, but must we therefore say that it is of no moment while he is standing that trial whether he has food or not, shelter or not? Does the body matter? After all, we fervently affirm our faith in its resurrection every time we say the Creed. Of course it matters; it is part of us. Without bodies we should be beings but we should not be men.

The very fact that men seek security and that the Western states at least have taken steps to give some sort of security to their people witnesses to a truth that is still tremendous even though we do not often ponder it. Man is a unique being, different in kind from the rest of creation. The state does not provide for the old age of horses, so it is true that no matter whether the units of the society that is the state think that man is merely a species of the large genus called life (I spell it with a small initial to distinguish it from the whelp from the womb of *Time*) or not, the corporate consciousness witnesses to the truth: man is a unique being, made, as the catechism tells man, in the image and likeness of God.

Where society goes wrong is in thinking that to ensure to a man a minimum supply of material goods is to satisfy his hunger for security. It is not surprising that society should make this mistake; it remains generally true that a man is esteemed more for what he *has* than for what he *is*. Pilgrims don't throw a saint until he's dead, a millionaire gets them while he's alive.

What can we do to restore to men's minds the truth that they have lost but toward which they aspire? Sixty years ago Leo XIII wrote that "civil society was renovated in every part by the teachings of Christianity; that in the strength of this renewal the human race was lifted up to better things—nay, that it was brought back from death to life, and to so excellent a life that nothing more perfect had been known before, or will come to be known in the ages that have yet to be. Of this beneficent transformation, Jesus Christ was at once the First Cause and the Final End; as from Him all came, so to Him was all to be brought back. For when the human race, by the light of the Gospel message, came to know the grand mystery of the Incarnation of

the Word and the redemption of man, at once the life of Jesus Christ, God and Man, pervaded every race and nation, and interpenetrated them with His faith, His precepts, and His laws. And if society is to be healed now, in no other way can it be healed save by a return to Christian life and Christian institutions."

The primitive Christians transformed the world; they knew the Incarnation for a fact. And all the saintly Christians who have lived after them have been animated by the same burning faith. They didn't have a social program or an economic program, or a strategic program. They were saints, they sought first the Kingdom of God and His justice; they were what Saint Paul so nicely describes as Ambassadors of Christ. And they had an effect on their time. Saints always have. And it is an effect that never obliterated. That is the wonderful thing. We belong to a great society; the Church is made up, we believe, of three orders, of whom we are one. We are apt to forget both the Church triumphant and the Church Suffering; to say nothing of identifying the Church Militant with our own revulsion from the state-of-things-as-they-are.

How to Approach the Matter?

Must we then go to Jones—and Smith—and say, "Look here, this hunger of yours for security can never be satisfied, so forget it. Try something else. Try to be a saint." And when they ask us how they begin must we say, "Of course you must love God and despise worldly things such as food and shelter and all that sort of thing."

Well, we might try that approach, but I think it unlikely to be a promising one. Suppose after telling Jones that Saint Francis embraced poverty for the love of God, he should reply, "Well, the difference is that poverty has embraced me." Should we see the difference?

We must do something however. We live in this time; the Incarnation is a fact in this time; this really is the year of our Lord. Acceptance of this fact does not mean putting on a trait-jacket or trying to put Smith and Jones into one. Acceptance ought to mean "a spouting well of joy within that never yet has dried!" Perhaps if we were what Saint Paul would have us be, "sad men, that rejoice continually; beggars, that bring riches to many; disinherited, and the world is ours," we might better be able to do something for Jones and Smith. Neither they nor their world are hopeless or contemptible; they are after-Christian, not post-Christian. The flame is weak, but it flickers.

EDWARD CAULFIELD

BOOK REVIEWS

Superb Life of Christ

**JESUS CHRIST: HIS LIFE, HIS
TEACHING, AND HIS WORK**

By Ferdinand Prat, S.J.

Translated by John J. Heenan, S.J.

2 Vols., Bruce, \$12.00

An old theology teacher of mine, innocent of any direct experience with the modern lay apostolate, one day charged the movement with fostering a secret Protestant influence in

the Church. He asserted that their theological discussion groups and Gospel-study activities were but a smuggling in of a trend toward private interpretations of the Bible, the essence of Protestantism.

Were it not for books such as Father Prat's masterpiece, and the wise guidance of astute chaplains, there might be some modicum of verisimilitude in the charge. Fortunately, recent years have brought out a full flowering of Christological works in the garden of the Church, and from among them the lay apostle can cull the exact shades, colors, and richness of treatment to fit his spiritual mood or need.

Father Prat's work belongs to the more serious and scholarly type of Christology. Poles apart from Mauriac, Papini or Chesterton, Prat is one of that great group of dedicated French scholars who have turned the tide of higher criticism and modernism by their impeccable learning and painstaking research. Following in the footsteps of deGrandmaison, Pinard de la Boullaye, LeBreton, Fillion, and LaGrange, the present author has brought up to date the fruits of their lifetimes of scholarships and his own rich years of study.

The main orientation of Prat's book is exegetical. He is a master of the text of the Gospels. He knows the nuances of the biblical languages and his two volumes are full of masterly insights into the inner meanings of the words of Christ and the evangelists. In this he is of inestimable value to the lay apostle who wishes to find quickly the latest result of the nineteen centuries of teaching and homilies on the text of the Gospels. With the aid of his exegetical index and his careful organization of his material, it is possible to turn rapidly to any word or text of the Gospel for a lucid explanation.

However, the more recondite and difficult questions of textual criticism and of scholarly background are not allowed to interfere with the text's consecutive presentation of the narrative of the Gospel-story. Where these do not fit harmoniously into the smoothly-written exposition, they are relegated to the appendices for further development. There the intellectually curious can see the compressed analysis of intricate problems within the compass of a few pages and within the reach of the lay mind.

Prat's treatment differs from deGrandmaison's and Felder's in that the controversies of the past century play a minor role in the treatise. One will not find the stridor of conflict marring the mind's quest for a richer understanding of the central Figure of all history. Where other apologetical works present the author fencing with the overwhelming number of sceptics and critics, this one portrays the Author and Giver of truth in His serene and compelling fascination.

In this too, Father Prat differs from the completely devotional *Life of Christ* such as Goodier's, Fouard's, Maas', or a hundred other popular books. Goodier's creative imagination and psychological interpretation of Christ are here replaced by a factual realism that sometimes makes short shrift of pious legends and unsound interpretations. Prat is a healthy antidote for sugary sentimentality and devotional extravagances.

But just as in Karl Adam's *Son of God*, the appeal of Prat's book is the logical sureness of his steps to a realization of Christ, and the on-sweeping rush of history's most dramatic and awesome revelation. For this reason, one will not find many novelties of characterization or ingenious constructions of the plot or dialogue. But the drama is there. The scenes are painted anew with sharper contrasts and more brilliant artistry. The scenes and acts are more precisely executed, and the climax of the chapter on "Christ Living in the Church" more effectively emphasized.

The usefulness of Father Prat's work and that of other Christologists is perennial for the lay apostle. I recall that one Catholic Action group at the university level after having spent a couple of years in the apostolate suddenly became aware that they knew more about the social apostolate than they did about the King of apostles, more about the Mystical Body than they did about the Head Himself. They took sabbatical leave of their engrossing apostolic labors to concentrate on the deepening of their realizations about the Master. Father Prat's gentle guidance through the often labyrinthine ways of the search is a guarantee of success in it.

Moreover, the social engineering of the lay apostolate is in great need of wider and deeper penetration with the spirit and content of the Gospels. Only on the solid basis of accurate understanding of Christ and His words can the plans and programs of the social apostolate be designed. For this, the serviceableness of Father Prat's concise summary of the ordinary teaching of the Church about the deposit of faith as contained in the words of the Gospel is inestimable.

The Catholic apostle who exercises the apostolate of art, of journalism, of writing, and of teaching cannot afford to be without the expert guidance of works like Father Prat's. A thorough assimilation of the prototype of all Catholic personality building is necessary equipment for the Catholic educator, no matter what form his communication of ideas may assume. The safeguard against modernism, the test of purity of doctrine, the reins on extreme interpretations under the influence of a private *gnosis*, and the positive illumination for the normal mind are all provided in the type of book that Father Prat's represents.

The lay apostolate will put off more of the exotic trappings of romanticism and dilettantism when it becomes more thoroughly suffused with the spirit and the power of the Gospels as understood in the Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the ordinary magisterium. As a worthy vehicle of that magisterium, Prat's *Jesus Christ: His Person, His Teaching, and His Work* can be urgently recommended for constant spiritual reading.

ALBERT S. FOLEY, S.J.

Neglected Theology

THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST

By John of St. Thomas

Translated by Dominic Hughes, O.P.

Sheed & Ward, \$3.75

In his introduction Father Walter Farrell remarks, "Assuredly, being a scholarly work, this book is not merely for babes." Undoubtedly the

reader will agree with him by recognizing this as meat, and rather tough steak at that. I don't say that with the purpose of trying to deter anyone from reading this book, but simply to give fair warning of the amount of work and effort involved. That the time and labor required are amply rewarded there is no doubt, and I should like to say for the sake of the stalwart soul who is considering studying this volume, that once you have persevered through the first few chapters the going becomes comparatively easy.

The timeliness of publishing a translation of this theological classic cannot be doubted. It is criminal that for so long too many Catholics (even the educated ones, even those intensely interested in the spiritual life) should have regarded in practice the gifts of the Holy Ghost as rather unnecessary spiritual appurtenances. At the same time in the last apostolate there has been an increased awareness of the Holy Spirit and of the necessity of submission to Him. But this awareness has suffered through lack of knowledge of His precise mission; this willingness to surrender oneself to His guidance has been hampered by ignorance of how this submission is to come about. That is why it is a joy to have a book which treats of the gifts in our souls which make us capable of responding readily to the breath of the Spirit.

There is a good introduction which places this commentary on the gifts of the Holy Ghost as treated by Saint Thomas in the whole Thomistic framework—especially in their relation to the beatitudes and the fruits of the Holy Ghost.

If I may be permitted I should like to give just one quotation. This is one which has something of lyric beauty as well as the grandeur of truth.

Through faith a man comes to a cloud-enshrouded mountain. In faith the mind is held captive, the eye is covered, and a man walks through a deserted path to the mountain of God. Finally, in that desert land, without paths, without water, he appears in the holy place of God. This is the not uncommon experience of those who are constant in prayer with only naked and dry faith. The soul seems arid and its tongue seems to cling to the side of its mouth, for it can only believe and cannot penetrate the mysteries of God.

However, when the Holy Ghost begins to breathe upon the soul, and to melt the frozen waters with His Spirit, through the gift of understanding, He lays open the hidden meaning of things. Through the breath of His charity, which He places in the soul, there is an interior sense and taste of the sweetness of the Lord. . . . He ends the captivity of the mind, just as a torrent frozen solid is loosed by warm air. Clouds are dispersed, and the aroma of the mysteries of faith, like the odour of a ploughed field, is spread abroad.

DOROTHY DOHEN

Living Liturgically

THE WEEK WITH CHRIST
by Emeric A. Lawrence, O.S.B.
ides, cloth \$3.50, paper \$2.50

In the short introduction Father Putz of Chicago comes right to the point. "The lay apostle must begin to see that active participation in the liturgy is a formative institution for the apostolate." Life in the Mystical Body of Christ means a going to God in the liturgy and to man in the apostolate. The liturgy must be the great teacher as well as the fountain of divine life. Because, as Father Lawrence reminds us, "there is only one life lived by Christ. He lives that life now in His Church, His Mystical Body."

You undoubtedly know the author from *Orate Fratres*. He has been active both to the liturgical and apostolic movements. To help us learn and understand God's language contained in the missal—a treasure too little valued—the author talks over with his reader some important parts of the Mass texts. He prepares the Mass for each Sunday, Holyday and some important feasts in *This Week With Christ*, which is to be used as a handmaid to the missal. Some selected prayers are explained, related to each other and to our daily lives. The suggestive meditations and the many practical suggestions make the prayers of the Mass—the central act of Christianity—come alive. The consideration of the various Mass texts includes in every instance with "Food for the Way," three short central quotations from the Mass text, which may help the reader retain the main thoughts during the week.

A certain amount of "moralizing" is evident. Let us accept it in a spirit of critical self-examination.

To this reviewer the value of this little volume lies in the potential of the method it supplies. It is a sort of "training manual" for the laity especially, but also for religious. Many a good sermon could be inspired by this book! I can well imagine that various groups engaged in Catholic Action will find this book useful in developing their spirituality. Particularly would I like to see fathers use it on Saturday evenings to prepare Sunday's Mass with their families.

ERNST FLORIAN WINTER

THE CHRISTIAN HOME AND ART
by Therese Mueller
Designs for Christian Living
Kansas City, Mo., 50¢

This little booklet makes most inspiring reading for families of all kinds. Mrs. Mueller sees that the natural and the supernatural must interweave throughout the entire day and temporal order. She shows how she works with respect to the arts in such a clear manner that readers will gratefully follow her suggestions and be stimulated to develop further ideas of their own. The arts belong in families and homes. The arts will be fostered under the kingship of Christ there rather than in museums, studios or factories.

Mrs. Mueller writes as a mother, and one who practices artistic creativeness in her own home. A practitioner will always find hearts open and minds willing to listen to his message. The examples given have their origin in many diverse lands. They are selected however for their Christian value. Christian art in the home is truly catholic, universal.

What makes a home Christian? The author answers, "the fact that Christians live in it and that they live in total dedication to the reign of Christ on earth." And the art works are Christian, because they have the external effects of a Christian way of life.

Much of the emphasis, therefore, is first on clear notions about the Church Year and the sacramental life and secondly interwoven into them are some examples. To these I should like to add just a few more, practices of our own home. I mention them only in order to show the great range of possibilities once husband and wife, head and helpmate, later on their children grown out of love and charity, clearly recognize the value of the Christian home as an *ecclesiola*, a little church. Possibilities are legion and everyone is a co-creator with God. For example, clay lends itself inexpensively as a perfect medium for making creche figures. In our community a number of families made their own creche; the father modeled Saint Joseph, the mother Our Lady, the parents together with the children the baby Jesus and some shepherds and kings. Some of the children added a bed, a couch, chest-of-drawers, birth cake with one candle—all for the comfort and joy of little Jesus.

The children ought to be permitted and encouraged to have near their beds their own little "altar" upon which they can change pictures and statues, flowers and decorations according to the liturgical days and seasons and supply their own "props" according to their abilities and likings which should be encouraged from an early age onward. A candle for each child's altar can be blessed and painted with liturgical symbols, with colors and turpentine. Every evening for night-prayers the older children may light theirs. This light constitutes the only light in the room, warm and mystic. Then after prayers, when they have been tucked into bed and received the parental blessing, one of the parents will pass the candle around to be blown out. With the darkness enveloping all, the day has fittingly and symbolically come to an end. Who has not heard the children then whisper, "It smells like a church." The educational value in this must not be overlooked; no disturbances are to emanate from the children's rooms after this ceremony.

The conducting of processions, the reading of the Mass and other imitations of sacred exercises by young children are to be fostered and encouraged in a Christian home; they lend themselves perfectly to artistic creativeness.

We have a changeable glass picture frame near our house altar in which we put, first thing in the morning, the picture of the day's saint and remark aloud on his or her qualities. One can collect good pictures and produce them oneself. The important thing is to live in conscious union with the saints in Heaven.

Every family, commensurate with its abilities, ought to *make* its own "Family Book" into which go the dates of weddings, births, Baptisms, etc., as these occur yearly in any Christian family. Such a Family Book lends itself to wonderful illustrations that can be continued and improved as the years slip by.

Later in life the children will look back happily on those years of Christian creativeness together in the paternal home and find strength for forging their own lives and helping to bring the world closer to Christ.

JOHANNA FRANZISKA WINTER

Three Small Books

Personally I can go on reading testimonial stories for quite some time. The latest one is *Roman Road* by G. R. Lamb (Sheed and Ward, 2.25), an Englishman born during the first World War and so belonging to my own generation. Two things impressed me especially. One is that in a messy world it is the misfits, if they escape suicide and insanity, who are most likely to come to roost in Catholicism, if only because they keep on looking. The other is George Lamb's honest view of the futility of climbing social ladders. He came from a Manchester slum, son of the working class. Just by the accident of being rather bright, he went to a middle-class school which made him a snob, and then to Cambridge where he was polished off. With each step he became more uprooted and in the end belonged nowhere. By the time he looked squarely at the fact that his poor widowed mother had been working in a factory all the years he had been acquiring his futile culture it was within several months of her death.

Simplicity (Newman, \$1.50) is another one of Father Plus' little books, especially nice because it's an especially nice virtue. It's a sort of anti-neurosis virtue, bringing one's whole life into harmony by unifying it. The key to its cultivation is to concentrate on the one thing necessary, the will and glory of God.

Léon Bloy is still a mysterious figure, even to his admirers. I read with great interest a book of essays about him by E. T. Dubois (*Portrait of Léon Bloy*, Sheed and Ward, \$2.00). The author is a highly-educated European woman, who seems to know thoroughly all the subjects needed for a study of this man. She discusses his life, his ideas, his literary caliber, his spirituality, his ideas about the Jews, etc., and makes her judgments. They seemed like good judgments to me. Bloy is the great melancholic, with a passion for poverty. The author does not deny that he may have had, as he himself supposed, a very singular prophetic mission. She takes his ideas very seriously and shows their profundity, especially remarkable for the time in which he lived. Was he a saint? Could he have been a saint and still have uttered those terrible anathemas? Elfriede Dubois is not ready to canonize Bloy. Had he had a director, stood a little less on his own judgment, been rather more docile to the Church, he might have reached those heights he so passionately wanted to scale. The author thinks his greatest reward lay in bringing a few choice souls to the Church.

C. J.

Our Authors

JOSEPH FOLLIET is a well-known French journalist, editor of *Chronique sociale*. He is one of the leading sociologists in the apostolate in France. "The Spiritual Crisis of Middle-Age" which we have translated is the first of a series of articles examining the whole question of lay spirituality. We hope to print his subsequent articles but we do not know the dates yet on which they will appear. . . . SISTER MARIEL is a Sister of Social Service on the West coast, a convert. . . . EDWARD CAULFIELD is an Englishman who has done a lot of thinking about modern social conditions. . . . FATHER FOLEY is a Jesuit who has had quite a bit of experience with Catholic Action groups. . . . The WINTERS are husband and wife.

Our Cartoons

Comments on some of our recent cartoons have made me somewhat self-conscious. INTEGRITY cartoons are not meant to do what the editorial cartoons in the secular press usually do, that is, confirm an already existing opinion or prejudice. I hope that ours are *leading* cartoons, pictures that provoke a *new* perspective. Yet because they are *leading* there is the danger that they may be mis-leading. Though intended to be ambiguous they sometimes register ambiguously.

So I thought it might be a good idea to give some explanation of our current cartoons from time to time. I hope, but cannot guarantee that the explanation will be read subsequent to seeing the cartoon, and not before, else the initial impact so necessary to a cartoon will be lost.

This month's cover states simply that the extremist in the Church is usually in that position to compensate for so many people crowding the conservative side of the boat. Without the extremist sometimes the boat would capsize. The extremist can only move toward the center when some of the conservatives do the same.

This month's center-spread needles the patronizers who offer assistance without sharing the burdens of those who suffer. The planned parenthood people are like that; they do not relieve you of the work but of the children. Such people fail to realize that pain and trouble are *necessary*. We help one another in our troubles by sharing them, not by getting rid of them in favor of comfort. The cross must be borne; we cannot escape it. Friends can make the burden sweet. ED WILLOUGHBY

THE WIND AND THE RAIN

Edited by NEVILLE BRAYBROOKE

1941 — *Recent and Forthcoming Contributions* — 1951

The Tragic Element in Modern International Conflict, by Herbert Butterfield; **Homer and Vergil**, by W. F. Jackson Knight; **Page from a Journal**, by Francois Mauriac; **America and her Poetry**, by D. S. Savage; **Lord George Sanger**, by Desmond MacCarthy; **The Oldest Medical University**, by Dermott Morrah; **Beauty and Science**, by E. F. Caldin; **The Novels of William Gerhardt**, by S. Gorley Putt; **The Cocktail Party**, by Hermann Peschmann; **Tradition and Inheritance**, by Christopher Dawson; **Anti-Semitism**, by Nicholas Berdyaev; **The Restoration of Freedom**, by Barbara Ward; **Graham Greene**, by W. H. Auden; **Existentialism**, by Jacques Maritain; **A Last Journal**, by Theodor Haecker; and **The Nature of Empiricism**, by D. J. B. Hawkins. Also short stories and poems by Roy Campbell, Charles Williams, Elizabeth Sewall, William Sanson, Mary Lavin, Vernon Watkins, John Heath-Stubb, Walter de la Mare, Kay Cicellis, Francis King, Jean Cocteau, Richard Eberhart, John Betjeman, Kenneth Patchen and Ezra Pound.

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JACQUES MARITAIN

has written a new book and the Thomas More Book Club has chosen it as a May selection. **Man and the State**, which is the title of the book, is written with all the philosophic background, profound knowledge and rigorous discipline that M. Maritain brings to all his works. Writing as "a Christian philosopher, who takes into account the theological data fit to provide a genuine grasp of the concrete realities he is talking about," M. Maritain discusses the concept of sovereignty, the requirements of political ethics, human rights in connection with the natural law, the relation of church and state, the role of authority in a free society and the other fundamental problems in a democratic philosophy.

Most book clubs would not offer **Man and the State** to their members. We believe it is an important book and we think our members—interested in intellectual and spiritual growth—will want to read it.

Among our other selections—and the selections are the criterion by which a book club must be judged—are **The Pillar of Fire** by Karl Stern, **Saint Paul's Gospel** by Msgr. Ronald Knox, **The Nine Days of Father Serra** by Isabelle Ziegler and **The Song at the Scaffold** by Gertrud von Le Fort.

Hilaire Belloc's **Richelieu**, **Apologia Pro Vita Sua** by Cardinal Newman, **The Week With Christ** by Emeric Lawrence, O.S.B., **The Mary Book** assembled by Frank Sheed and **Growth or Decline?** by Cardinal Suhard are also on our list of selections, as are **Helena** by Evelyn Waugh, **The Seven Storey Mountain** by Thomas Merton, **Everybody Calls Me Father** by Father X and **The Encounter** by Crawford Power.

If you would like to become a member of the Thomas More Book Club and receive selections like these at a direct discount rather than dividend books you may not want, or if you would like more information about our Book Club, please mail the coupon below.

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BEYOND EAST AND WEST

by John Wu

John Wu, born Wu Ching-hsuing around fifty years ago, came into the Church at 40, made a new Chinese translation of the Psalms and The New Testament, went to the Vatican as Ambassador from Nationalist China, taking his wife and thirteen children along (you see them all with the Holy Father in one of the illustrations). Dr. Wu is completely Catholic, completely Chinese, almost alarmingly apostolic and quite charming—no INTEGRITY reader can possibly miss his book. **Illus.** \$3.50. **Ready April 11th.**

A LOST LANGUAGE

AND OTHER ESSAYS ON CHAUCER

by Sister Madeleva, C.S.C.

Sister Madeleva is, like Chaucer, a Catholic and a poet. Can you think of any other Chaucer critic who is both? As if this didn't give her enough advantage, she's a nun too, and so able to throw all sorts of pleasantly surprising sidelights on his nuns. Who but another nun could tell us that the Prioress who ate so daintily was being extra careful not to spill anything because she was wearing a new habit, "as we do when travelling"? The lost language, by the way, is not so much Middle English as Chaucer's language of devotion. \$2.25.

SONG AT THE SCAFFOLD by Gertrud von Le Fort (\$2.25) is reprinted. This story of the martyrdom of a convent of Carmelite nuns in the French Revolution, is, we are told, the author's best loved book in Germany. We're very weak about it ourselves.

SELECTED POEMS by Robert Farren (\$2.50 is the poet's own choice from all he has published so far.

Order books from your bookstore

The April-May **TRUMPET** will be nearly ready by the time you read this. There will be lots more about these books in it, and of course about a dozen others. If you don't get **THE TRUMPET**, you have only yourself to blame—Pirie MacGill will send it to you free and postpaid if you just let her know you want it.

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